2/3/69

Dear You,

Bud phoned me this morning, early, to tell me of the newest reversal. The one thing that is fixed and firm is that your office is not capable or making and sticking to a decision (nothing personal). He gave me somebody's message that he try and restrain me. That would be impossible and he will not attempt it. However, I tell you frankly that the restrain I impose upon myself leaves me in doubt that it is the proper course. As I have tried to help you, so would I not hurt you. Despite all those things that I cannot justify, I am still persuaded that Clay Shaw is Clay Bertrand. With a mind not corrupted by what is with such abandonment of reason has come to be known as the "law" (or by a greater association with its practitioners, so large a percentage of whom are less fit for decent company than a worn-out whore) than under other circumstances I would elect, this is enough for me. I want a judicial determination of fact and regret only that it has already been so inhibited, so pre-conditioned, perhaps pre-determined. I fear that what we may get may be much less than this.

Enclosed is a copy of a letter I have written Vince. Had there been more time, were I not so sick at this latest of the unending New Orleans stupidities, perhaps I'd have written him more. If only you could have seen his insane posturings when he was here the Sunday after I was in New Orleans! He not only spoke and acted like a two-bit Mussolini, he went through identical gesturings with his jaw! He was wildly irrational, obsessed with the idea he could control Jim, had suddenly achieved an importance he had never earned and otherwise could not, so much the center-stage actor who would milk every opportunity, strike every pose, be the truly great man of decision! I had anticipated some of what transpired, for as you know, I have long regarded him as paranoid. To the degree I could, I prepared. I even arranged for Wecht to call me, as he was for another purpose, at a time when Vince, Bud and Tom Katen, who Vince had brought with him, to be part of the conversation. As I knew he would, Wecht spelled out exactly what failing to go ahead would mean. He left no doubt in Vince's mind or anyone else's, that the most urgent need was to proceed without delay. He also said that if you did not, it would and should cost you the expert witnesses, who might thereafter endanger their reputations by continued association with the office that had for so long been clamoring for access to the secret materials and then refused to do the very little required to get the most essential of them. But I did not, and I guess it was not possible to, anticipate all of what Vince found himself capable.

If you people want to destroy yourselves, just continue to listen to Vince. I cannot think of a single thing he has done in this entire case that was not wrong. What I say in the enclose is no unkindness, believe me. His judgement is the worst I have even encouhtered and his paranoia the most prosyletizing.

I prolong this interruption of work that can have some meaning only because I believe, regardless of whether or not he pays the slightest attention, Jim should have the enclosed immediately. With the situation that has come to pass, I could not care less what he does or does not do. I merely do this because I believe it required of me. I urge you to discharge your own responsibility by giving it to him as soon as you can. What then happens is his affair and his responsibility.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

COPY

2/3/69

Dear Jim,

Bud phoned me this morning, early, to tell me of the newest reversal. The one thing that is fixed and firm is that your office is not capable or making and sticking to a decision (nothing personal). He gave me somebody's message that he try and restrain me. That would be impossible and he will not attempt it. However, I tell you frankly that the restrain I impose upon myself leaves me in doubt that it is the proper course. As I have tried to help you, so would I not hurt you. Despite all those things that I cannot justify, I am still persuaded that Clay Shaw is Clay Bertrand. With a mind not corrupted by what is with such abandonment of reason has come to be known as the "law" (or by a greater association with its practitioners, so large a percentage of whom are less fit for decent company than a worn-out whore) than under other circumstances I would elect, this is enough for me. I want a judicial determination of fact and regret only that it has already been so inhibited, so pre-conditioned, perhaps pre-determined. I fear that what we may get may be much less than this.

Enclosed is a copy of a letter I have written Vince. Had there been more time, were I not so sick at this latest of the unending New Orleans stupidities, perhaps I'd have written him more. If only you could have seen his insane posturings when he was here the Sunday after I was in New Orleans! He not only spoke and acted like a two-bit Mussolini, he went through identical gesturings with his jaw! He was wildly irrational, obsessed with the idea he could control Jim, had suddenly achieved an importance he had never earned and otherwise could not, so much the center-stage actor who would milk every opportunity, strike every pose, be the truly great man of decision! I had anticipated some of what transpired, for as you know, I have long regarded him as paranoid. To the degree I could, I prepared. I even arranged for Pecht to call me, as he was for another purpose, at a time when Vince, Bud and Tom Eaton, who Vince has brought with him, to be part of the conversation. As I knew he would, Pecht spelled out exactly what failing to go ahead would mean. He left no doubt in Vince's mind or anyone else's, that the most urgent need was to proceed without delay. He also said that if you did not, it would and should cost you the expert witnesses, who might thereafter endanger their reputations by continued association with the office that had for so long been clamoring for access to the secret materials and then refused to do the very little required to get the most essential of them. But I did not, and I guess it was not possible to, anticipate all of what Vince found himself capable.

If you people want to destroy yourselves, just continue to listen to Vince. I cannot think of a single thing he has done in this entire case that was not wrong. What I say in the enclose is no unkindness, believe me. His judgement is the worst I have even encountered and his paranoia the most proselytizing.

I prolong this interruption of work that can have some meaning only because I believe, regardless of whether or not he pays the slightest attention, Jim should have the enclosed immediately. With the situation that has come to pass, I could not care less what he does or does not do. I merely do this because I believe it required of me. I urge you to discharge your own responsibility by giving it to him as soon as you can. What then happens is his affair and his responsibility.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

COPY